

Wall Street Was Mistaken.
It Likes U. S. Control.
Black Maria—Private Car.
Another Reformation.

Wall Street has always told you that Government ownership of railroads would be a dreadful, terrible thing. Government could NEVER manage railroads successfully, it took private ownership mixed with private graft to do that.

But you notice that as soon as Government management of railroads is announced WALL STREET GAMBLERS RUSH IN TO BUY THE RAILROAD STOCKS.

Yesterday morning about half-past eight o'clock we handed to printers in The Times office a piece of copy which read, "Look out now for interesting, quiet, persistent gambling and investing in railroad stocks."

This copy also pointed out the effect that Government ownership would have on New York Central for instance. About an hour and a half later, the investing and gambling began and the railroad stocks began jumping up—ten points in an hour.

New York Central, Union Pacific, and other stocks that have been persistently dropping under "magnificent, intellectual private ownership," went jumping up as soon as it was known that the United States Government was to take charge of the railroads.

Not much of a compliment to that grand and "efficient private management."

When once a reformation starts, let those interested look out—whether it be a reformation in religion, politics, or industrial ownership.

When THE reformation started with Luther at the head, many wise men thought it was just a temporary movement; that it would soon pass away. It was attributed to passing conditions, dissatisfaction in Germany, etc.

But Luther died nearly four hundred years ago, and the reformation still exists.

There is another kind of reformation starting today.

On this, the birthday of the President, the Government takes control of railroads.

And Garfield, the son of a former President in charge of the country's coal, announces that "the Government will take full control of fuel."

Various industrial plants are being taken over.

The wise men of this day say, "Special conditions cause all this; it will pass."

Special conditions called it, but it may take very special conditions to change it, and restore the old system complete in its grafting beauty.

Bandages intended for the soldiers are found covered with poison. One of the big camps issues an order forbidding soldiers to eat canned tomatoes. Ground glass has been put into the tomatoes—and ground glass causes death.

Not all internal enemies are Prussian. Louis Davison, of New York, for instance, prosperous owner of a big business, is locked up on the charge of stealing \$50,000 worth of uniform cloth from the Government. About \$500,000 worth is supposed to have been stolen in all.

That middle class kind of thief will probably be put in jail.

But the thief that knows how to steal a hundred million through profiteering—no jail for him. Comfort now, high praise for philanthropy, Red Cross gifts, etc. Perhaps a Senatorship later.

In this country the man who steals a little rides in the "Black Maria." The man who steals millions rides in a private car.

By the way, what about the private cars that have been traveling over the railroads carrying ONE INDIVIDUAL BACK AND FORTH?

What, for instance, about the private car that has been devoted to carrying a certain major general of the Red Cross between Washington and New York at intervals?

Will Mr. McAdoo consider that an entire car should be used to carry one solemn financial fox along the rails?

American troops followed Mexican bandits across the border into Mexico—killed eighteen of them. Others crawled off and died at their leisure.

How long will this job be done in installments?

Uncle Sam ought not to imitate the kind-hearted man that wanted his dog with a stub tail. The man hadn't the heart to cut the tail off at all once, so he cut off a quarter of an inch every day for forty-eight days.

It would have been better for the man, better for the dog, to cut the whole tail off at once.

It would be better for Uncle Sam and better for Mexico, to make a clean job of what needs to be done down there.

A small flock of armored automobiles with quick firing guns, and a smaller flock of flying machines in the air, to direct the fighting machines on the ground, would cut the bandit tail off the Mexican dog quickly and do much good.

WEATHER:
SNOW
FLURRIES;
COLDER
TONIGHT

NUMBER 10,391.

WASHINGTON, FRIDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 28, 1917.

[Closing Wall Street Prices.]

PRICE WITHIN DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, 10 CENTS; ELSEWHERE, 20 CENTS.

The Washington Times

FINAL EDITION

ARE WE GETTING NEARER TO PEACE?

A cable by the United Press correspondent at London furnishes the text of a letter from Lloyd George to a congress of Laborites. The letter discusses the war aims of the allies and contains expressions which lead to the asking of the question, "Are we getting nearer to peace?" The full text of the cable follows:

LONDON, Dec. 28.—The allies' purposes in continuing the war are not imperialistic or vindictive, but for the future freedom and peace of mankind, Premier Lloyd George declared today in a letter to the laborites "war aims" congress.

"The question of a fresh declaration of our war aims is constantly kept in view," the premier declared, "but such a declaration will only be issued in agreement of the allies."

"The ideals for which we are now fighting are the same as those when Britain entered the war."

"I have never been more convinced than now that the allies' purposes in continuing the war

are not imperialistic nor vindictive, but to achieve the future freedom and peace of mankind."

Lloyd George's letter followed an opening speech by Arthur Henderson, British laborite leader, who declared that the allies must definitely renounce any desire for conquest and urged a re-statement and clarification of war aims.

Labor Leader Arthur Henderson in his speech indorsed the recent speech of President Wilson, in which the American war aims were outlined.

"Militarism must give way to democracy," said Mr. Henderson. "But the allies must give up their intention of placing an impenetrable barrier against the German people."

He made it plain that he favors a continuation of the war until the German military caste is crushed. However, he declared that British labor now calls for a clear definition of England's war aims if it is to make further sacrifices on the field of battle.

Mr. Henderson wound up by saying that British labor wants the opportunity to find out how Germany would regard laborite peace proposals.

WAR BOARD IN TEMPORARY CHARGE OF R. R. OPERATION

CZERNIN'S PEACE PLANS CARRY LITTLE WEIGHT HERE

By DAVID LAWRENCE.

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Peace negotiations some day are going to cause excitement in Washington and real interest, but nothing that Germany has said thus far, not even the latest pronouncement from Count Czernin to the Russian delegates, has bent in the slightest the determination of President Wilson to see the war ended only after the principles of liberalism repeatedly set forth by him are assured of acceptance.

Must Win World Confidence.

Lloyd George's renunciation of any imperialistic or vindictive purpose on the part of the entente allies in his statement to the English labor conference is but a counter-offensive designed to show the German people that there is no intention to fight until they are annihilated, but only until the rest of the world feels confidence in the government they set up.

Reiteration of war aims by Lloyd George is taken to mean here that English labor leaders believe a mere statement by President Wilson is insufficient unless accompanied by equally emphatic words by British and French statesmen. While expressing adherence in general to what the President of the United States has said, it is true that nothing as elaborate or as detailed as Mr. Wilson's last message to the American Congress on the subject of peace has come from the British or French cabinet.

Arthur Henderson's efforts to obtain a re-statement of war aims which shall convince the laboring classes in Germany of the unselfish purposes of the Entente is viewed as a leaf out of Germany's book on peace offensives. If the Allies can succeed in persuading the masses in Germany of the sincerity of the Allied intentions, they may be able to accomplish the social revolution which it is so often urged may bring about a change in the Berlin government and the beginning of peace negotiations.

Administration Silent.

Neither the President nor the Secretary of State permitted any reflection of their views to be made known today, but there would have been a distinct change in the attitude of officials throughout the Government had the latest proposal of the Central Powers been regarded by the powers-that-be as affording anything like a basis for ending the war.

If anything, there seemed to be a disposition everywhere to question the sincerity and good faith of the Berlin government, and to look upon the whole offer as intended to appease certain elements in Russia which might block the way to a separate peace.

Plan to Blame Allies.

Being fully confident that the entente would not accept the bases offered, the Germans are believed here to be getting ready to place the blame for their inability to make liberal terms to Russia on the stubbornness of the western allies.

It was only a coincidence that the Czerin proposal are not clear understood here, particularly the vague reference to the right of minorities in establishing the political independence or subjection of those nationalities which were not sovereign states at the outbreak of the war. Some observers were inclined to regard this as a pretext for opposing a free Poland, while others thought it was an adroit reference to the possibility of settling the question of Alsace-Lorraine by referendum vote of the people.

But in any event, if the German government intended to make an impression in Washington by the proposals made via the Russian peace conference, the effort can be regarded as having accomplished little toward

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Sixty-one Years Old Today



He celebrates his birthday by putting every railroad in the country under Government management.

PRESIDENT WILSON OBSERVES HIS 61ST BIRTHDAY QUIETLY

President Wilson is sixty-one years old today.

The White House is flooded with congratulatory messages. The President is celebrating his birthday auspiciously by taking over the railroad control of the country at noon, an epochal event in the history of the nation.

While the President is thus celebrating his sixty-first birthday the family will observe the event quietly. Tonight there will be the usual family dinner.

With the thousands of telegrams many cable congratulations were received from macrocosmic water. From all the allied governments came congratulations and wishes for continued good health.

The President is enjoying the best of health, and has been since entering the White House five years ago. The gigantic burdens that the war has placed upon his shoulders have apparently made no inroads on his physical conditions. He is the same man, mentally alert and cool.

It was only a coincidence that the Presidential railroad proclamation should come on the President's birthday. It never occurred to the President that the historical date would fall upon his birthday.

QUAKES CONTINUE, MANY HOMELESS IN GUATEMALA

Thousands in Guatemala City are without shelter, while the earthquake shocks there continue, said a message dated 6 p. m. yesterday to the State Department today.

Danger of pestilence was seen from the fact that the water situation is serious and sanitary conditions are correspondingly affected.

The American Red Cross is aiding the homeless and has collected \$500 in the city to date and has offered help from here.

The foreign colonies, including the American, are reported safe.

NEW YORK, Dec. 28.—The death toll of the earthquake that partly destroyed Guatemala City on Christmas Day is expected to reach more than 100 persons, it was indicated in meager dispatches today.

Detailed accounts of the disaster are lacking because the stricken city has been cut off from the outside world. It is known that a number of official buildings were wrecked, including the National Palace, which houses various branches of the government. The general postoffice and railway station are also reported wrecked.

DR. JOHNSON IDENTIFIED AS BUYER OF CYANIDE

By A. CLOYD GILL, Staff Correspondent.

RICHMOND, Va., Dec. 28.—With the positive identification by a local druggist of Dr. Lemuel J. Johnson, the twenty-three-year-old Middlesex, N. C., dentist as being the man who called at his place of business three weeks ago and purchased twenty grains of pure cyanide of potassium, the police today assert that they have obtained the chain of circumstantial evidence on which they expect to prove the young dentist guilty of the murder of his secret bride of three months.

No preliminary hearing will be had, the police said today, but the case will be continued until the grand jury convenes on January 7.

Wanted Full Strength.

Johnson is in jail here charged with giving his bride two large capsules of cyanide when he left her in Richmond on December 10. From the effects of taking one of the capsules on Saturday, December 15, the bride died. After attending his bride's funeral here Johnson attempted suicide at Wilson, N. C., but was saved because he took an overdose of the poison—incontinence.

Just when it appeared that Detectives John F. Wiley and Gordon R. Smith had a clue to the purchase of the poison at Norfolk, Va., a leading Richmond druggist came forward with the admission that he sold twenty grains of cyanide to Johnson three weeks ago.

The druggist stated that he asked Johnson at the time if he knew what he was doing, in handing such a deadly poison, Johnson, said the druggist, was nervous at the time and declined to accept a substitute that was offered him, which was of only 20 per cent strength.

20 Grains Enough.

He first called for an ounce of the poison, but later agreed to accept only twenty grains, saying that would serve his purpose.

Johnson stoutly denied that he had purchased any poison in Richmond, but when the druggist who made the sale was taken to the jail to identify him, the young dentist almost collapsed. There was no exchange of words between the dentist and the druggist.

Later the dentist told The Times representative that the druggist had called on him, and he admitted having known him for several years and having made purchases from him from time to time. He did not discuss the purchase of the poison, but was greatly concerned over the visit of the druggist to his cell.

The family of the dead bride, who for a time refused to condemn Johnson, but held him guiltless, today are so bitter against him that they declare they would do him violence if possible.

Mrs. George E. Knight, mother of the dead bride, visited Johnson in his cell on Christmas day and sought to console him. After conferences at (Continued on Page 2, Column 1.)

TWO U. S. PRIVATES KILLED BY BOMB FROM AIRPLANE

WITH THE AMERICAN ARMY IN FRANCE, Dec. 28.—Two American soldiers, members of a wood cutters' division, were killed on a recent moonlight evening when a German aviator dropped bombs on their camp.

Both victims of the raid were privates.

Recent nights have been ideal for raiders. A brilliant moon lights up the snow-covered country like a midnight sun. Last night it was possible to read a newspaper out of doors in the reflected light. Precautions such as extinguishing all lights in the American camps and villages are of scant protection when the moonlight shows the camps and men sharply outlined on the white snow.

Aeroplane motors are occasionally heard all over the American zone. For the most part the Germans, however, hope for a visit from the raiders, just to relieve the monotony of a dreary life.

SLAVS ACCEPT PLANS SPURNED BY FRENCH

AMSTERDAM, Dec. 28.—Russian peace negotiators have accepted Count Czernin's German terms as the basis for general peace discussions and will renew the conferences at Brest-Litovsk Wednesday next, according to word from that city received here via Berlin today.

Czernin asked for an immediate negotiation of matters affecting Russia alone.

PARIS, Dec. 28.—France will refuse to negotiate any German-concocted peace, such as the deft terms announced by Count Czernin provide, Minister of Foreign Affairs Poincaré declared today in the chamber of deputies.

At noon today the great railway systems of the United States automatically passed into the control and under the direction of the Government. There were no formalities incident to the transfer. Not a single official anywhere was changed. Changes may come later, but for the present at least, the roads will be continued as they were.

Prior to assuming his new duties as Railroad Director, Secretary McAdoo held several conferences. He met with members of the Interstate Commerce Commission, over whose orders he now reigns supreme, and with the Railway War Board, which up until today has been actively directing the operations of the railroads.

EX-SENATOR THORNTON DIES IN LOUISIANA

Word was received here today from Alexandria, La., of the death of former Senator John Randolph Thornton, seventy-one, who died at his home this morning. The funeral will be held tomorrow morning, and interment will take place in the Rapides Cemetery at Pineville, La.

Senator Thornton was a member of the United States board of ordnance and fortifications.

YESTERDAY
The Washington Times
GAINED
6,723 Lines of Advertising (24 Cols.)
Over the Corresponding Day (Dec. 28) Last Year.

EDGAR D. SHAW, Publisher.

SEC. M'ADOO ACTS AFTER 90-MINUTE MEETING

As the hands on the clock on the postoffice pointed to noon today steam whistles in all sections of Washington began to blow. Whistles of locomotives coming into Washington joined in the din of hoarse and the bells pealed their clamor. It seemed as though an old year was passing into a new year with the noise so familiar to Washington. Scores of people called fire headquarters to find out what was going on.

The telephone girls chirped back, "The Government has taken over the railroads."

Director General McAdoo today placed the existing war board of private railroad executives in charge of temporary operation of the nation's lines.

This was the sole official announcement following a ninety-minute conference between McAdoo and the executives, during which the roads of the country quietly passed from private to Federal control on the hour of twelve.

The "emergency operators" include Fairfax Harrison, president Southern railway; Howard Elliott, N. Y. N. H. & H. railway; Julius Kruttschnitt, chairman executive committee Southern Pacific; Hale Holden, president C. B. & Q.; and Samuel Rea, president Pennsylvania lines.

Fledge Hearty Support.

The board, McAdoo stated, pledged him its hearty support, and agreed to continue operations until he saw fit to put into effect his planned organization.

Problems of operation were chiefly discussed, he said, and no decision of any kind was reached.

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First Order Ready.

The first order of Secretary McAdoo was prepared early today. It was to be issued during the course of the day. In brief it assured the essentials which will relieve congestion and provide:

For the immediate pooling of all traffic and facilities.

For the common use of all terminals everywhere without preference.

For the elimination of all unnecessary and roundabout long hauls.

For elimination of shippers' preference and billing of shipments of all classes of freight in accordance with traffic conditions.

This action will assure great relief. It will not solve all of the transportation problems, of course. But it is expected that it will open the way to making the railroads 100 per cent efficient within the next few months.

All of the members of the railroad war board, with the exception of Hale Holden, who was not in the city, went into conference with Secretary McAdoo at the Treasury at 11:30. They stated that they had nothing to volunteer—that if Mr. McAdoo wanted any assistance they would furnish it as asked. Some of the members of the board are disposed to accept the naming of a dictator as a reflection

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